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INFO RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0147
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 PORT AU PRINCE 000130

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR
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SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
TREASURY FOR MAUREEN WAFER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UNSC](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: VISIT OF SENATOR BILL NELSON TO HAITI, JANUARY
12-13

REF: A. BEIJING 410
[B.](#) BEIJING 371
[C.](#) 06 PAP 1393

[11.](#) This message is sensitive but unclassified -- protect
accordingly.

[12.](#) (SBU) Summary. Senator Bill Nelson (D-Florida) on January 12-13 led a congressional delegation to Port-au-Prince that included the Deputy Commander of the U.S. Southern Command, Major General Glenn Spears. CODEL Nelson, accompanied by the Ambassador and Emboffs, held meetings with Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Mulet, Prime Minister Alexis, President Preval, and Haitian National Police (HNP) chief Andresol, and visited USAID-funded projects providing vocational education to school drop-outs and promoting community stability in poor neighborhoods. Sen. Nelson raised the issues of security, narcotics trafficking, and the MINUSTAH mandate renewal, warning that the GoH dispute with China should not endanger Security Council renewal of MINUSTAH's mandate. Sen. Nelson's interlocutors agreed that the security situation was the most pressing problem confronting Haiti, but expressed confidence that ongoing MINUSTAH and HNP operations against criminal gangs would lead to improved security. President Preval stressed that the U.S. needed to do more to interdict drugs transiting Haiti on their way to the U.S. Sen. Nelson noted that trafficking patterns had changed, with more drug shipments originating in Venezuela, and that the U.S. was committed to strengthening cooperation with Haiti to combat new patterns in trafficking. On China, President Preval expressed frustration with the Chinese position, maintaining the GoH had done nothing to warrant their displeasure, but recognized the importance preventing a Chinese veto of the MINUSTAH mandate. He indicated he would dispatch his Foreign Minister to consult with Chinese officials to resolve the dispute. (Note: He has since indicated that he may send another senior advisor instead. End Note.) Haitian officials thanked the Senator for his support of the HOPE legislation, and asked for continued assistance in implementation to allow Haiti to enjoy maximum benefits of the new trade benefits. End Summary.

SRSG Mulet

¶3. (SBU) SRSG Edmond Mulet (Guatemala), accompanied by his deputy, Luiz Carlos da Costa (Brazil), newly-arrived force commander General Carlos Albert Dos Santos Cruz (Brazil), and acting UN Police (UNPOL) Commissioner Richard Warren (Australia) called at the Ambassador's residence on the evening of January 12 to meet Senator Nelson. The Senator thanked the MINUSTAH officials for their service to Haiti and, stressing the paramount importance of establishing security, asked for an update of MINUSTAH actions. SRSG Mulet responded that the MINUSTAH initiative launched on December 22 to target the most dangerous gang leaders was ongoing. Though MINUSTAH had not been able to capture gang-leader Beloney in their initial operation, they had destroyed and effectively quarantined his compound. MINUSTAH was planning operations against other gang leaders in Cite Soleil and continuing to support the Haitian National Police (HNP) in combating crime throughout Port-au-Prince. In response to Senator Nelson's query, General Dos Santos Cruz affirmed that his troops had the necessary support from UN headquarters to take action against criminals. SRSG Mulet explained that the commitments from the troop contributing countries were firm, but that maintaining the authorized number of UNPOL officers in the mission had been more difficult. UNPOL remained roughly 200 officers below its authorized level of 1,692.

¶4. (SBU) SRSG Mulet noted that with Security Council discussions regarding the renewal of the MINUSTAH mandate set to begin on January 29, time was running out for the GoH to satisfy Chinese concerns regarding the GoH's actions regarding the one China policy and head off a Chinese veto of the mandate renewal. Mulet understood that Beijing had

PORT AU PR 00000130 002 OF 004

instructed its UN Permrep to veto the renewal, thus signaling that the GoH would have to meet the Chinese demand for formal written apology. (Note: Subsequent reporting from Embassy Beijing (refs A and B) somewhat contradicts Mulet's account of the Chinese position. End Note.) Mulet heartily approved of Senator Nelson's suggestion that he press the need to resolve the GoH's dispute with China in his meetings with President Preval and Prime Minister Alexis.

Prime Minister Alexis

¶5. (SBU) Senator Nelson met Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis at his office on the morning of January 13. The PM began by noting that GOH priorities are establishing security and putting the country &on track8 for socio-economic development. The PM thanked the USG for the passage of the HOPE Act (allowing for increased export of garments from Haiti to the U.S.) and stated that the U.S. was Haiti's most important bilateral partner. The USG should continue to support the strengthening of Haiti's institutions, particularly the HNP, and continue its programs for health care, potable water, education, infrastructure, reforestation, and the control of drug trafficking; and help Haiti deal with criminal deportees. Regarding security, MINUSTAH and the HNP were making progress, but that the HNP should take more responsibility, as they were better suited to deal with the gangs and is less likely to inflict collateral damage.

¶6. (SBU) Noting that he would be speaking to Haitian-Americans in Florida on a conference call at the end of the day, Senator Nelson asked what assistance he should ask for Haiti. The PM stressed education, citing the need to build and equip schools, and to train teachers. Regarding China, the PM stated that President Preval was responsible for GoH policy. The GoH would not, in any case, send a letter of apology to the PRC.

President Preval

¶7. (SBU) Senator Nelson met President Preval at the national palace, immediately following his meeting with the Prime Minister. Prime Minister Alexis, Justice Minister Rene Magloire, Finance Minister Daniel Dorsainvil and presidential economic counselors Elizabeth Delatour and Gabriel Verret joined President Preval for the meeting. President Preval thanked Senator Nelson for his support for Haiti and for the passage of HOPE, and asked for the U.S. Congress' assistance in helping the GoH and the private sector meet the requirements of HOPE legislation and increase exports. Senator Nelson deferred to the Ambassador, who pointed out that it was now up to the executive branch within the USG to lead implementation, and that the Embassy had already established consultations with the GoH and the private sector. She urged President Preval to communicate to working level GoH officials the importance that he attached to HOPE implementation.

¶9. (SBU) President Preval also asked for assistance in obtaining bills of lading in advance for ships embarking from Florida to Haiti in order to facilitate collection of customs duties. Haiti was losing hundreds of millions of dollars in customs revenue, and the GoH had found a partner in the U.S. to collect duties on goods prior to their arrival in Haiti. The GoH's partner had informed him, however, that the U.S. federal authorities must authorize the advance provision of bills of lading.

¶10. (SBU) President Preval stressed the role that drugs play in the country's insecurity. Drug trafficking led to corruption in the police force as well as the justice system, which created an insecure environment despite the presence of MINUSTAH. His statement at the parliament (blaming the U.S. for Haiti's drug problem due to its role as a consumer country) was not meant to offend anyone but to draw attention to facts. The idea for a drug summit between Haiti,

PORT AU PR 00000130 003 OF 004

Colombia, and the Dominican Republic had come to him during his visit to Nicaragua for President Ortega's inauguration, and those presidents had agreed. They subsequently thought to include Jamaica and the Bahamas, and Preval hoped that "consumer countries" would also attend. Senator Nelson responded that the U.S. needed to address the demand side of the drug problem. He added that most of the drugs entering Haiti came from Venezuela, posing a new challenge in combatting transshipment through Haiti. General Spears briefly described the efforts of SOUTHCOM to minimize drug flow in the region and said that SOUTHCOM will share intelligence with countries to assist with arrest and prosecution.

Preval on China

¶11. (SBU) Senator Nelson raised the GoH dispute with China, noting the importance of ensuring that China does not veto MINUSTAH's mandate renewal. President Preval agreed that MINUSTAH's presence was critical, but complained that China had tried to continually increase its demands on Haiti for approval of UN mandates going back to the missions of the 1990s. President Preval said that China was mistaken in believing that Haiti sought UN recognition for Taiwan: the GoH supported the "one China" policy. The problem originated with his meeting with the Chinese Permrep to the UN in New York last spring, and he suspected that his statements were not translated properly. President Preval intended to send the Minister of Foreign Affairs to New York to discuss the issue and assured Senator Nelson that the GoH is not launching an international crisis. (Note: President Preval has since indicated that he will also dispatch presidential Secretary General Fritz Longchamps, a former foreign minister

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and closer advisor than the foreign minister, to Beijing.

End Note.)

HNP DG Andresol

¶12. (SBU) The Senator met with HNP Director General Mario Andresol at HNP headquarters on the afternoon of January 13. He thanked DG Andresol for his commitment and asked for his views on the drug problem. Andresol explained that drug shipments arrived by air throughout Haiti and that he needed to better disburse his counter-drug resources. At present, he had to dispatch his officers from Port-au-Prince, making it nearly impossible to interdict drugs in the field. To compensate, he established checkpoints on the main routes into and out of Port-au-Prince to intercept drugs transited over land, but he lacked sufficient personnel to undertake a comprehensive effort. Even if he were better able to do his job, Haiti's justice system remained weak and impunity was an enormous problem. Haiti should accept help in transferring criminals outside of Haiti if other countries could prosecute them. This was a political issue, Andresol lamented, and nationalism often overrode other interests.

¶13. (SBU) Andresol echoed comments made by MINUSTAH officials regarding operations in Cite Soleil. Even though MINUSTAH and the HNP had not captured Beloney they had destroyed his organization. MINUSTAH and the HNP would move against gang leader Evans Jeune before Carnival. There had been a lack of coordination and shared vision between MINUSTAH and the HNP in the past, but cooperation had improved greatly, particularly between the HNP and UNPol. Senator Nelson raised the possibility of more U.S. police officers coming to MINUSTAH to assist the HNP, which Andresol enthusiastically welcomed, adding that he needed more assistance from the U.S. for the special HNP units such as the SWAT team.

¶14. (SBU) Senator Nelson inquired about vetting, and DG Andresol replied that vetting had just begun with himself and ten senior officials. The PM had asked him to conclude the vetting process quickly, and he expected to dismiss between 500 and 1,000 HNP officers as a result. He had already fired 535 officers, and there were others whom he could not fire

PORT AU PR 00000130 004 OF 004

but whom he did not trust. Vetting was a potential morale problem, and he needed to make clear that he would fairly implement the process for the good of the HNP and that it was not a process directed at certain individuals. He also needed to proceed in a phased manner so he did not disrupt HNP operations. The HNP force currently stood at roughly 7,000, and a new class of over 600 officers would begin training in February.

Visits to USAID projects

¶15. (U) Senator Nelson visited a USAID-funded youth training center located in Carrefour-Feuilles, a densely populated and often violent slum area. The visit took place in a community-based organization that is implementing the Haiti Out-of-School Youth Livelihood Initiative (IDEJEN), a project that targets unschooled youth and primary school dropouts ages 15 to 24 and provides them with a package of education, workforce and health services. IDEJEN workers briefed Senator on the project's aims as well as on the weaknesses in Haiti's education system which produces a high number of dropouts. He toured the center and observed youth in sewing and plumbing classes and spoke to them about their life circumstances and the positive impact the project is having on them. He was encouraged to learn that the youth in the sewing classes would receive a credential from the Ministry of Education and that, in the implementation of the HOPE Act legislation, the young women would be highly competitive for jobs in the textile sector.

¶16. (U) The Senator followed with a visit to a multi-purpose playground in the Macira community of Delmas. He was greeted by leaders of the association that developed and submitted the project idea to USAID's implementing partner, the International Organization for Migration (IOM). After a tour of the constructed facilities, the Senator, and party, had a conversation with community leaders. The spokesperson thanked the USG for its support, spoke of the importance of a safe place for young people to gather and play sports, and of the fact that the playground was used for weddings, receptions and civic events. The spokesperson stated that the USAID-funded activities had restored confidence and hope, and reduced crime. As a result, people have returned to live in Macira. The Senator toured an area adjacent to the community playground to see the condition of the streets before the street paving project.

¶17. (U) Senator Nelson's office cleared this message.

¶18. (SBU) Comment. Senator Nelson took the opportunity of his press conference just prior to his departure to clarify the nature of the drug transshipment problem confronting Haiti and the U.S., pointing out that traffickers transship drugs through Haiti primarily by air, thus posing a different challenge than that addressed by our joint 1998 maritime agreement that President Preval cites in demanding more action by the U.S. The Ambassador, Emboffs, and General Spears had opportunities to clarify this point with other senior GoH officials on the margins of Senator Nelson's meetings, and they have asked for further briefings. With the Drug Enforcement Administrator planning to visit Haiti shortly, we have an excellent opportunity to move beyond current misunderstandings on GoH side and cement a basis for more productive cooperation.

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